

Message Text

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ORIGIN ARA-10

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O P 262119Z MAY 78
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE
INFO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA PRIORITY
AMCONSUL BELIZE PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 135115

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PBOR, GT, UK, BH

SUBJECT: BRITISH REQUEST TO USE DULLES FOR BELIZE
SUPPLY FLIGHTS

1. UK DELEGATION IN ANNUAL UK-US LATIN CONSULTATION
ASKED FOR OUR VIEW OF POSSIBLE BRITISH USE OF EXISTING
UK GOVERNMENT FACILITIES AT DULLES AIRPORT FOR STAGING
OF WEEKLY SUPPLY FLIGHT TO BELIZE IN LIEU OF PRESENT
USE OF GANDER. UK GAVE LOGISTIC RATIONALE, STATING
USE OF DULLES WOULD SAVE ONE DAY EACH FLIGHT BECAUSE
OF CREW FLIGHT HOURS RESTRICTIONS, AND INDICATED IMPETUS
WAS FROM MILITARY, NOT FONOFF. BUSHNELL INDICATED HE
WOULD DISCUSS IN WASHINGTON, BUT ONE MAJOR OBJECTION
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IS NOT WANTING TO MAKE CHANGE JUST AS NEW GUATEMALAN
GOVERNMENT TAKING OVER.

2. YOU MAY TELL UK THAT USG HAS NO PROBLEM IN PRINCIPLE
WITH USE OF DULLES FOR WEEKLY ROUTINE SUPPLY FLIGHTS,
BUT PREFERS NOT TO INAUGURATE THAT CHANGE NOW SO AS
TO AVOID SENDING SIGNAL SUBJECT TO MISINTERPRETATION

BY PRESIDENT-ELECT LUCAS. WE PREFER TO APPROACH LUCAS SOMETIME AFTER HE ASSUMES OFFICE (PERHAPS ABOUT AUGUST 15) AND TELL HIM THAT FOR TECHNICAL LOGISTICAL REASONS BRITISH HAVE REQUESTED CHANGE OF STOPOVER POINT OF ROUTINE WEEKLY SUPPLY FLIGHTS TO BELIZE FROM GANDER. WE WOULD ADD THAT WE ASSUME GUATEMALANS HAVE NO OBJECTION, AND ON THAT ASSUMPTION, WE WILL ADVISE BRITISH THAT THEY MAY USE DULLES FOR THESE ROUTINE SUPPLY FLIGHTS.

3. IF GUATEMALANS RAISE UNANTICIPATED OBJECTION, WE WILL CONSIDER REQUEST IN LIGHT OF CONDITIONS THEN PREVAILING. OTHERWISE WE WILL AT THAT TIME AUTHORIZE BRITISH TO PROCEED WITH CHANGE TO DULLES SUBJECT TO CONDITION THAT OUR APPROVAL IS FOR ONE (OR AT MOST TWO) WEEKLY FLIGHTS. ANY GREATER NUMBER OF FLIGHTS, AND ANY FLIGHT INVOLVING WARPLANES, WOULD HAVE TO BE SUBJECT TO SPECIFIC PRIOR APPROVAL BY THE USG.

4. OUR RATIONALE FOR THIS TIMING AND CONDITION IS TO PRESERVE AND ENHANCE OUR CREDENTIALS WITH NEW GUATEMALAN ADMINISTRATION AS A NEUTRAL ON BELIZE AND HENCE INCREASE OUR INFLUENCE WITH THAT ADMINISTRATION IN ENCOURAGING MODERATE AND FORTHCOMING STANCE ON BELIZE. WE BELIEVE BRITISH WOULD SUPPORT THIS RATIONALE AS BEING IN THEIR INTEREST AS WELL AS CONFIDENTIAL

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OURS. IF THIS PROCEDURE GIVES THEM ANY PROBLEM, THEY SHOULD INFORM US. WE WOULD ALSO APPRECIATE KNOWING WHETHER BRITISH HAVE CONSIDERED, AS AN ALTERNATIVE TO DULLES, STAGING THESE ROUTINE FLIGHTS THROUGH BERMUDA. VANCE

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